

35 Classic Propaganda Techniques

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Ad Hominem: Attack persons who advocate for a proposition, rather than the proposition itself.

Appeal To Authority: Prove a proposition by associating it with someone in a position of power.

Appeal To Prejudice: Disprove a proposition by associating it with someone an audience dislikes.

Arguing From Ignorance: Proving a proposition by the absence of complete and perfect disproof.

Bandwagon: Prove a proposition by asserting that a consensus of opinion supports it.

Beautiful People: Prove a proposition by associating it with admirable or enviable people.

Begging The Question: Loading an unsupported assertion into a tangentially related question.

Big Lie: Presenting a persistent, emotionally charged false narrative across numerous venues.

Black And White: Assert that relative or partial differences are absolute and complete.

Buzzwords: Words or slogans used to signal and reinforce an unsupported narrative.

Card Stacking: Present selected non-representative information supporting a proposition.

Deification: Presentation of a proposition or personality as categorically above reproach.

Demonization: Presentation of a proposition or personality as categorically beyond redemption.

Dog Whistle: Employ language that has a loaded meaning to targeted members of an audience.

Euphemism: Employ language that minimizes or negates the emotional impact of its subject matter.

False Cause: Asserting that an arbitrarily chosen event or action caused a subsequent result.

False Flag: Create a violent or offensive event or message in an opponent's name.

False Dichotomy: A forced either/or choice between unrelated or non-conflicting alternatives.

Glittering Generalities: Apply purely abstract words of praise and celebration to a proposition.

Good Old Days: Reference unrealistic, idealized beliefs about a past that never happened.

Guilt By Association: Depict an adversary as a partner of the audience's nominal enemies.

Loaded Language: Consistent application of laudatory or derogatory verbs and adjective variants.

Name Calling: Apply derogatory terms or descriptions to propositions or persons.

Obfuscation: Deliberate application of confusing or meaningless language.

Plain Folks: Presenting a proposition as the common sense of normal / ordinary people.

Quote Mining: Quoting sources out of context to create de facto falsified statements.

Red Herring: Introduce irrelevant propositions to misdirect attention.

Scapegoating: Project blame or responsibility onto victims or 3rd parties.

Stereotyping: Identifying a personality or proposition with a ready-made derogatory caricature.

Staining: Incorporate deliberately offensive content or associations into an existing narrative.

Straw Man: Attribute an arbitrary, easily defeated proposition or position to an adversary.

Testimonial: Endorsement of a product or proposition by a party perceived as independent.

Third Party Technique: A fabricated or irrelevant independent endorsement or criticism.

Transfer: Arbitrarily associate a personality or proposition with an emotionally loaded symbol or belief.

Well Poisoning: Attributing obviously false statements and information to a critic or adversary.

Note: Many of the techniques listed here overlap with one another, but have some differentiating features. As examples, Plain Folks and Beautiful People may present as sub-categories within Bandwagon; Transfer operates across many techniques in both Deification and Demonization contexts.